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## **Introduction**

Karremann, Isabel ; Zwierlein, Cornel ; Groote, Inga Mai

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# Introduction

Isabel Karremann, Cornel Zwierlein and Inga Mai Groote

How can one forget one's own faith if religion is an overwhelmingly strong factor in a given society? This is the question the contributions of our volume engage with by taking into account the power of religion, confessions and religious politics in early modern Europe on the one hand, and on the other, by showing the ways these forces were explicitly and implicitly disempowered at the same time.

## 1. A Religious Turn in Early Modern Studies?

For the last decade, early modern studies have been significantly reshaped by raising new and different questions on the uses of religion. This 'religious turn' was at first discussed mostly with respect to modern states and societies, following the shock that the perception of contemporary religious fundamentalism after 9/11 had exerted on intellectual scholarship (Aikman 2003, Almond 2003). The old master narrative of secularization was fundamentally questioned: how could we speak of a secularized modernity if this same modernity was marked by religious and confessional division, not only with regard to Islam and other non-European religions but also to 'provincialized' Europe's own history (Chakrabarty 2000, Dietze 2008)? By turning to regional issues such as the Virgin's apparitions in Bismarck's Germany (Blackbourn 1993; Howard 2003, 2006), or by using the interpretative framework of early modern historiography on confessional schisms of later periods such as nineteenth-century neo-confessionalism (Blaschke 2000, Hölscher 2001), the secularization narrative was put into question in many ways, both in historical and in literary studies.<sup>1</sup> Would it really make sense to continue to speak of the sixteenth

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1 For the field of historical studies, cf. Berger 1999, Cox 2001, Lehmann 2004 and 2005, Lalouette 2005 with an introduction responding to the renewed discussions in France about *laïcité*; and Blickle/Schlögl 2005. In the field of English literary and cultural studies the work of Debora Shuger (1988, 1990, 1994 and 2001) proved formative; in particular her claim that "religion during this pe-

and seventeenth centuries as a ‘confessional age’, in contrast with an age of secularization promoted by the Enlightenment and a dominantly secularized modern world, at least in its Western parts? Taking the multiplicity of modernities (Eisenstadt 2000, 2002) into account, would the old idea of linking ‘secularity’ and ‘modernity’ still make sense or would that be only a European exception – and perhaps even then an exception to be encountered only rarely in its ideal sense?

Scholars of modernity have sometimes discussed these questions, with superficial references to early modern confessionalism, but have seldom really been examined in detail by early modern studies. Thus the interpretative framework of ‘confessionalization’ was imported into nineteenth-century research without taking into account the long critical discussion of that concept by early modernists (Zwierlein 2007a). They did not therefore reflect on what became the unintended outcome of their new research agenda, namely, that the traditional separation between times and periods would be dissolved in certain ways. If nineteenth-century Europe was still a deeply religious and confessionally impregnated world region, and if fundamentalism has reappeared periodically world-wide up to the present day, how could we keep telling the story of a fundamentally ‘unmodern’ Europe of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, one marked by the strong entanglement of religion with all the other spheres of life? The idea of a ‘return to a pre-Westphalian’ state of being, often used in current political sciences, is a good indication of this convergence of time perceptions and of the dissolving of epochal boundaries.<sup>2</sup> Do we

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riod supplies the primary language of analysis” (1990, 6) invited new historicist research into the ongoing, intimate relationship between literary culture and the changing religious culture after the reformation; for an extensive overview over this research, cf. Jackson and Marotti 2004. Much of this work builds on revised histories of the English Reformation as a contested, piece-meal process (rather than an ubiquitously welcome, singular replacement of one religion by another) written by, among others, Duffy 1992, Haigh 1993 and Marshall 2002.

- 2 The metaphor of the end of the ‘Westphalian system’ and the existence of a new medievalism was put forward as early as 1977 by Bull and Hedley (who, however, did not subscribe that thesis at that time). Since then the metaphor has pointed to the dissolution of the classical conception of sovereignty and the international system as a sphere of interaction only of those sovereign states; for some current reflections on this interepochal correspondance of pre- and postmodernity, cf. Zwierlein et al. 2010. The link with the problem of religion and religious wars is mostly established in that discussion with reflections on terrorism, with the new asymmetric wars often being compared to the Thirty Years’ War (Mün-

perhaps feel closer to the age of religious wars and conflicts than to the ideal type of Voltairean enlightenment?

Since the 1990s, early modern historiography has reacted to this shift of themes and the perception of time horizons. For example, from the 1960s on, historians discussed the wars in late sixteenth-century France in terms of 'Civil Wars' about social conflicts between some proto-bourgeois actors and feudal lords, or at least as wars caused only by conflicts between different noble factions. It was only with the monumental study by Denis Crouzet, bearing the telling title *Holy Warriors* (1991), that religion was reintroduced into the discussion, as Mack P. Holt 1993 has rightly remarked. Some historians even took up the nineteenth-century notion of 'fundamentalism' to project it back onto the confessional antagonisms of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Schilling 2007).

At the same time that the 'religious turn' in historiography, political and cultural studies generated new discussion of the social processes at work in early modern Europe and of their cultural effects – from the struggle over religious rites and doctrines to the persecution of secret adherents to forbidden practices – the question of how people could dissemble their faith and avoid religious conflict began attracting new interest. Often, the issue of religious pluralisation and the divisions between Catholic and Protestant positions, among sectarian movements, between the church and the state or between Christianity and Islam, have been mostly debated in terms of dissent and escalation: the religious turn entered the scene with themes like 'holy warriors' and 'religious fundamentalism'. This may have been due to the fact that religious plurality becomes most evident in polemic representations such as pamphlets, treason statutes, religious tracts or ecclesiastical historiography, each claiming authority for their particular perspective. While such representations clearly reflected and actively shaped early modern culture, they did not comprise this culture in its entirety. As scholars like Carlo Ginzburg or Peter Zagorin already pointed out many years ago,<sup>3</sup> early modern confessional controversy did not always erupt into hostilities over how to symbolize and perform the sacred, nor did it lead to a paralysis of social agency. Rather, everyday life had to go on, people had to adjust somehow to divided loyalties – between the old faith and the new, between religious and secular interests or between officially sanctioned and privately held

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kler 2002, Singer 2003). For a discussion of this issue in relationship to the concerns explored in our volume, see the afterword by Jane Newman.

3 For a detailed overview of this scholarship, see part 3 of this introduction.

beliefs. The order of the day may often have been to suspend confessional allegiances rather than exacerbate religious conflict, suggesting a pragmatic rather than polemic handling of religious plurality. This raises the urgent question of how ‘normal’ transconfessional and even transreligious interaction was produced in a context of highly intensified and always present reflexivity of religious differences.

Our volume takes up this question and explores it from an interdisciplinary and interconfessional perspective. More to the point, the essays collected here engage with texts, practices or discourses in which the formation and deformation of memory through acts of oblivion is at stake, more or less explicitly. The title “Forgetting Faith?” raises the question of whether it was necessary or indeed possible to sidestep religious issues in specific contexts and for specific purposes. To reconstruct possible sites and strategies of ‘forgetting faith’ does not, however, mean to describe early modern culture in a revisionist gesture, pointing to the state of research cited above as a process of secularization. Rather, the collection invites discussion of the specific ways available for dealing with confessional conflict in an oblivional mode, precisely *because* faith still mattered more than many other social paradigms that emerged at that time, such as nationhood, ethnic origin or class defined through property.

This volume thus acknowledges the centrality of confessional conflict in early modern culture, but seeks to go beyond the adversarial stance which marks its more extreme positions. Our focus is not on how confessional conflict was experienced or presented in terms of antagonism, but rather how it was negotiated in textual and aesthetic representations as well as in everyday life. While the issue of pragmatic downplaying of confessional conflict has already received substantial critical attention, by concentrating on ‘forgetting’ we would like to take into account the result of the renewed interest in religion and religious antagonism. As we understand it, the main difference between early modern and premodern (European medieval) religiosity is the degree of reflexivity: early modern religious politics differs in that it is able to reflect on religion in a functional mode. ‘Forgetting faith’ is thus not to be taken as a metaphor for an unconscious putting aside of religious practice, but rather as an acknowledgment of those deliberate acts of oblivion that were an integral part of political, cultural and economic action in the context of a high degree of social reflexivity concerning religion. (CZ and IK)

## 2. 'Forgetting Faith' from the Perspective of Literary and Cultural Studies

The methodological approach that will seem most striking and has, indeed, generated both controversial and constructive debates at the conference which preceded this volume,<sup>4</sup> is the claim that there was a cultural forgetting of faith in early modern Europe. This conjunction of religion and oblivion is, however, not only a critical gambit, but can in fact be seen as an historical constellation. In particular the Reformation, with its abolition of ritual practices and its program of iconoclasm, was perceived by many contemporaries in terms of erasure and forgetting.

Sixteenth-century commentators displayed from the start an acute awareness of the oblivional impact of the Reformation on religious practice. Robert Parkyn's narrative of the Reformation, 1532–1554, for instance, is a chronicle of loss and erasure. Parkyn was a Catholic priest in Yorkshire who lamented the violent dissolution of the monasteries and the abolition of traditional rites in the 1530s. He celebrated the restoration of Catholic worship under Mary, yet managed to accommodate himself to the Protestant regime of her successor Elizabeth (Cressy/Ferrell 2005, 29). His own life thus serves as an example of 'forgetting faith' in the sense that we intend to employ the term in this volume: Parkyn succeeded in surviving four shifts in the official religion, from Catholicism to Protestantism under Henry VIII, to a militant Protestantism under Edward VI, back to Catholicism under Mary and finally to the more moderate, conciliatory theology of the Elizabethan Settlement, a feat not many people, let alone priests, achieved easily at that time. To dismiss Parkyn as a mere dissembler and hypocrite would not do justice to his case; his narrative of the Reformation speaks of a deeply felt allegiance to the tenets and rites of the traditional religion and a sense of traumatic loss, which he seeks to preserve in memory. This tension between forgetting and remembering is also at work in the narrative itself in that it is a chronicle of both, the traditional practices and their destruction:

Then a proclamation went forth, anno domini 1540, that *no holy* day should be kept [...] there was *no candles* sanctified [...] but *utterly omitted* [...] the sanctifying of the ashes was *omitted and left* undone, and so *no ashes* was given to anyone [...] on Palm Sunday, being Our Lady day Annunciation, *no palms* were sanctified nor borne in men's hands, *no procession, no passion*

4 The conference was held at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University, Munich, 15–17 July 2010.

read in Latin at mass, but in English only in the pulpit (repr. in Cressy/Ferrell, 30; emphasis added).

By spelling out what has now been lost, Parkyn's account records the old religion and at the same time measures its difference from the new one. The absence of the familiar consoling rituals of worship is mediated through a series of negations which can be taken as the rhetorical signature of post-Reformation texts about ritual practice. This rhetoric encompassed a wide scope of emotions and attitudes towards the Reformation. It ranged from the furious despair of the Catholic exile William Allen, who noted in 1565 that "nowe there is no blessing of mannes memorie at all" (Marshall 2002, 265) to the triumphant tone of injunction twenty-eight of the 1547 set, which openly acknowledges the erasure of memory as its aim: "take away, utterly extinct and destroy all shrines, covering of shrines, all tables, candlesticks, trindles or rolls of way, pictures, paintings and all other monuments of feigned miracles, pilgrimages, idolatry, and superstition; so that there remain no memory of the same" (qtd. in Duffy 1992, 480).

These early modern voices that align the Protestant abolition of traditional rites with oblivion can still be heard in modern histories of the Reformation. One of the most influential among them, Eamon Duffy's *The Stripping of the Altars*, reconstructs the history of the Reformation's impact on the beliefs, structures and practices of traditional religion, above all as a "story of the dismantling and destruction of that symbolic world" (1992, 1). This systematic destruction was, as contemporary quotations suggest, a source of intense anxiety, particularly in regard to the "cult of the dead", that elaborate system of intercessory prayer for the souls of the deceased who were believed to suffer in purgatory, the intermediate state between heaven and hell (ibid., 8). The medieval cult of the dead was pervaded by a language of memory: the obsequies celebrated for each departed soul in regular intervals after burial, for example, were called the week's, month's, and year's "mind" or remembrance. The aim of these prayers was to shorten the soul's time in purgatory as well as to keep up the communication between the living and the dead. "To die meant to enter a great silence, and fear of being forgotten in that silence was great." It could, however, be breached by means of prayers which kept the dead in the memory of the living (ibid., 327 f.). Yet while the Reformation abolished the doctrine of purgatory along with the religious practices attending to it, it could erase neither the memory

of these rites nor the oblivional anxieties which motivated them. What, then, happened to these residues of traditional faith?

The dominant model to date that accounts for the fate of discarded ritual practices is that they re-emerged in other cultural areas. It has been most thoroughly conceptualized by Elizabeth Mazzola in her study of the psycho-pathology of the English Renaissance. She starts from the general insight that “in the course of more important projects, cultures routinely discard symbols and other imaginative habits”. However, these abandoned symbols, habits and practices, “do not simply disappear from the mental landscape; and sometimes, this discarded material takes up far more space. No longer scrutinized so carefully or clung to as dearly as official public knowledge, outworn symbols can find their powers increased by occupying the margins of accepted ideas” (Mazzola 1998, 1). This is emphatically the case with the Reformation. Because Reformation theology “required a radically different framework to hold in place sacred meanings and values” (ibid., 9), ideas that had been held in reverence before were now “publicly acknowledged to be false or groundless or unpersuasive, like Catholic conceptions about purgatory and transubstantiation. Simply put, these ideas – along with the symbols they employ and the practices they encourage – no longer work: they fail to describe reality.” (ibid., 4). Whereas in the long run traditional Catholic beliefs and practices were successfully demolished, neither the emotional need for consolation they offered nor the imaginative habits they catered to could simply be erased. In Mazzolas words,

sacred symbols and practices still powerfully organized the English moral imagination in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, continued to orient behaviors and arrange perceptions, and persisted in specifying to believers and non-believers alike the limits of the known world. These sacred symbols remained the primary guides to and deepest structures for feeling (Mazzola 1998, 3).

Mazzola accordingly raises the possibility that these devalued signs and practices were displaced onto other cultural sites, most notably literature and the theatre, where they continued to fulfill important psychological and social functions and thus compensated for the traumatic loss of traditional religion. This model has proven to be of great explanatory power, underpinning influential studies of the impact of the Reformation on the early modern literary imagination such as – to name but a few – Huston Diehl’s *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage* (1997), Michael Neill’s *Issues of Death* (1997), or Stephen Greenblatt’s *Hamlet in Purgatory* (2001).



The conceptual limits of the compensation model nevertheless become apparent when we measure it against the new critical literature on cultural forgetting that has emerged in the field of memory studies.<sup>5</sup> The studies carried out within the paradigm of the compensation model are themselves dedicated to the early modern project of remembering, of salvaging discarded memories from the grave of oblivion. Despite their occasional oblivional vocabulary, they do not really take account of the cultural work that forgetting performs or enables, but only treat it as a force of destruction, a threatening absence which must be countered by an elaborate *ars memorativa*. This oppositional way of thinking is encapsulated in an essay by Umberto Eco whose very title rejects the possibility that forgetting might be an object of conscious thought, deliberate action or indeed scholarly discourse: “An *ars oblivionalis*? Forget It!” (Eco 1988). This dismissal is based on the strictly semiotic assumption that all use of signs is “a means of making present” (ibid., 258), never absent: there is no way of representing, let alone thinking of, what is not there any more. Because for Eco all mnemotechnics are by definition semiotic systems, he deduces that there can be no equivalent art of forgetting: “If the arts of memory are semiotics, it is not possible to construct an arts of forgetting on their model, because a semiotics is by definition a mechanism that presents something to the mind and therefore a mechanism for producing intentional acts” (ibid., 259). While Eco readily admits that it is possible to forget by accident, as a natural event, because of an illness or old age, to forget deliberately, let alone through use of linguistic or material signs, is utterly impossible.

Eco’s model can comprehend forgetting only as a negative power, as failure of memory, as absence. It is deduced from and stands in the tradition of antique and medieval mnemotechnics which treat oblivion as a destructive force of nature, an involuntary process against which a recuperative, intentional *ars memorativa* is pitched. This is borne out by the

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5 It is also challenged by more recent literature on the history of the Reformation which demonstrates that Protestantism, far from utterly abolishing commemorative rites, developed its own elaborate set of practices such as funeral sermons and reformed prayer. These “distinctive Protestant modes of remembering” have been reconstructed for example by Peter Marshall, who points out: “Despite the dissolution of chantries and fraternities, the proscription of requiem masses and intercessory prayers, the putting out of obit lamps, and abrogation of bede-rolls, Elizabethan and early Stuart England possessed a plethora of methods and occasions for memorializing the dead, and sanctifying their memory” (Marshall 2002, 265).

founding myth of mnemotechnics as told by Cicero in *De Oratore*: the Greek poet and rhetorician Simonides of Keos attended a symposium which was cut short by the collapse of the building in an earthquake. Only Simonides escaped and was able to identify those killed and mutilated beyond recognition by remembering exactly the order in which the participants had been sitting (Yates 1966, 17–20). In this episode, the destruction of the building equals the destructive force of oblivion, while Simonides' mnemotechnics restores order and identity as well as the very possibility of performing proper funeral rites. It thus carries the seeds not only of one but of two elaborate sets of mnemonic practices, the rhetorical *ars memorativa* and the ritual commemoration of the dead, which both in their different ways serve to uphold social order and identity against their obliteration by death and oblivion (cf. Goldmann 1989).

However, the relation between forgetting and memory is more complicated than this dichotomous model of catastrophic suffering and purposeful art, of obliteration and preservation, of nature and culture suggests. In an essay which critically engages with Eco's, the linguist and philosopher Sybille Krämer suggests that we move away from what she calls the traditional 'model of compensation' (which we have already seen at work in early modern studies) and toward a model which considers remembering and forgetting as complementary forces (Krämer 2000, 251–252, 268–269). They do not work against each other but are two complementary processes through which cultural memory is shaped and organized. This involves a new perspective on forgetting as a purposeful, constructive cultural act. Such a view requires that we distinguish for the moment between individual forgetfulness and collective forgetting. Individual forgetfulness may indeed be largely involuntary, the result of old age, an illness, or a traumatic experience; in this sense, it is a matter for medical treatment or psychiatric analysis. Collective forgetting, on the other hand, like collective remembrance, can be deliberate, purposeful and regulated. "Therein", explains David Lowenthal, "lies the art of forgetting – art as opposed to ailment, choice rather than compulsion or obligation, [an] astute judgment about what to keep and what to let go, to salvage or to shred or shelve, to memorialize or anathematize" (Lowenthal 1999, xi).

One example for such a purposeful collective forgetting is the practice of amnesty, which literally translates as 'not remembering'. In ancient Athens, the democrats granted an amnesty to the supporters of the tyrannous oligarchy after its overthrow around 400 B.C., vowing to abstain

from punishment and persecution. As Nicole Loraux has pointed out, this policy of forgetting had a twofold aim. The more immediate one was to avoid blood feuds and to preserve the rather precarious peace. The other, more far-reaching one, was to delete the stain of tyranny from the annals of Athens in order to construct an unbroken line of democratic tradition (Loraux 2002).<sup>6</sup> ‘Deletion’ is not merely a metaphor here: the names of the oligarchs were in fact erased from the stone frescoes which constituted the material memory of Athens. In the case of amnesty, we can see, it is not collective remembrance but collective forgetting which performs the task of creating unity and order as well as identity.

Moreover, what is forgotten is not irretrievably gone but literally overlooked, put aside as insignificant or as an obstacle to signification. The German literary critic Renate Lachmann has proposed a model of culture as a semiotic system which accommodates forgetting as a necessary process of cultural semiosis itself – not, as Eco claimed, as opposed to it. For Lachmann, cultural memory is not a site of passive storage but rather a dynamic, continuous process of remembering and forgetting. In the economy of cultural signs and meanings, forgetting is an important instrument of regulation. A memory which continually accumulates experiences, knowledge and meaning quickly becomes a hypertrophy of singularities; it is shaped and kept operable only by the selection of certain experiences as meaningful and the deletion of others as insignificant. In Lachmann’s semiotic terminology, forgetting can be considered as a temporary desemiotization (*Desemiotisierung*) of signs rather than their material deletion or destruction. ‘Desemiotization’ means that a sign loses the semantic and pragmatic value which it had while circulating within a cultural system and its institutions (Lachmann 1993, xviii). In contrast to the example of the Athenian amnesty, it is not the material vehicles of signs which are deleted, but their value as currency. Because this is so, the devalued sign can also be reintroduced into the circulation of culturally validated, meaningful signs. In such a process of ‘resemiotization’, vacant, disused signs are re-included in active memory and charged anew with meaning – but their new value typically differs from the mean-

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6 Forgetting can indeed be seen as a precondition of modern democracies, in that each form of social contract presupposes the willingness of its members to forget divisive differences between them, in particular civil wars. For examples and references, cf. Forty 1999, 7 f., and Krapp 2005.

ing they had before. This difference can also be seen as a form of cultural forgetting.

The relation of memory and the past, then, is not one of storage and retrieval, but of a reconstruction of the past under conditions and constraints determined by the present. And forgetting is always part of this reconstruction since, as John Frow observes.

rather than having a meaning and a truth determined once and for all by its status as event, [the past's] meaning and its truth are constituted retroactively and repeatedly [...]. Data are not stored in already constituted places but are arranged and rearranged at every point in time. Forgetting is thus an integral principle of this model, since the activity of compulsive interpretation that organizes it involves at once selection and rejection (Frow 1997, 229).

The concept of inclusion and exclusion or of selection and rejection, is not only a matter of the cultural economy of signs, where forgetting means that some signs are not activated in communication and thus simply drop out of circulation. Rather, it begs the urgent question of who determines what gets included and what is excluded from the realm of meaningful signs. This raises another important point which has received critical attention in recent years, the politics of forgetting.

What gets included and what is excluded from the realm of meaningful signs? A theoretical answer to this question can be found in the work of the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, especially in his concept of the social frames of memory which he developed in *Les Cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (1925, published posthumously 1952). Halbwachs claims that there is no memory, be it individual or collective, which is not social. There is no clear-cut boundary between my own memories and those of others because they develop in the process of everyday interaction and within common frames of reference or significance. Even the most private memories are created and recreated in interaction with others and with shared social frames. In Halbwachs' view, social memory is inherently reconstructive: a society remembers of its past only what each epoch can reconstruct within its given frames of reference. These frames have the status of cultural fictions and are subject to historical change. Experiences, then, become meaningful memories only insofar as they can be inserted into active frames. Forgetting can be understood as the result of a change in reference frames, in the process of which some memories become meaningless, insignificant, and hence expendable. At the same time, a change in frame means that other pieces of information, knowledge or experience are included in the new set of frames and, by

being reinvested with significance, become memories (Assmann 1991, 346 f.).

It should be immediately clear that the repeated, refracted waves of the plural 'English reformations' (Haigh 1992) constitute a series of shifts in the frames of reference that determine what can be remembered (and revered) as meaningful and true. This example also demonstrates immediately that cultural frames of memory do not, as Halbwachs' teleological model suggests, peacefully follow one after the other, but that they constitute simultaneous, competing claims to authority and truth, claims that are staked violently. One model for considering the alteration of interpretive frames in terms of power is that offered by the British cultural critic Raymond Williams. In *Marxism and Literature* he described the internal dynamic of the cultural process in terms of the 'emergent', 'dominant', and 'residual' features of societies (Williams 1977, 121–127). The dominant is embodied in the majority of the society, or by its ruling and most powerful class. It is not a natural given but results from an ongoing series of selections and hence also exclusions from the full range of human practice. Specific skills, practices, relationships, or perceptions that the dominant social order "neglects, excludes, represses, or simply fails to recognize", Williams terms 'the residual' and 'the emergent'. The residual (in our case, the beliefs and practices of Catholicism), is usually still active in the cultural process (clandestinely observed in private or transferred, for example, to the realm of literature), yet it is divested of its validity and authority (merely available as idealized memory or as 'poetry', as Mazzola remarks). Typically, these elements of the past are subjected to a process of, in Lachmann's words, desemiotization and resemiotization so that they can be incorporated into dominant culture. If a residual feature proves too oppositional, the dominant tries to suppress or marginalize it – another act of forgetting which is performed, for example, through censorship or iconoclasm. Within the dominant, there are also emergent elements – new meanings and values, new practices and kinds of relationship – that are being developed out of new frames of reference as societies change. They may themselves become incorporated into the dominant eventually, as was the case with the proto-Protestant ideals of the Lollards that developed from hereticism in the fourteenth century to the orthodox theology of the sixteenth century.

Another important aspect of the politics of forgetting is its role in nation formation. Studies of nationalism tend to focus on acts of remembrance as constitutive of an imagined community: on national holidays, monuments, and commemorative ceremonies that aim at generating soli-

darity in the present through remembering a shared past. Yet the constitution of a national identity is just as much brought about through acts of forgetting as through acts of remembrance, as the French historian Ernest Renan already observed in 1882. Trying to come to terms with the question “What is a nation?” [*Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?*], Renan examines and dismisses definitions of national identity on the basis of dynastic lines and race, language and religion, shared interest and territory. Instead, he privileges memory as the integrative force that brings about a “fusion of component populations” (Renan 1990, 10) and highlights *forgetting* as the operative principle of that fusion:

Forgetting, I would even go so far as to say historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation [...]. The essence of a nation is that all individuals have many things in common, and also that they have forgotten many things. No French citizen knows whether he is a Burgundian, an Alan, a Taifale, or a Visigoth, yet every French citizen has to have already forgotten the massacre of Saint Bartholomew or the massacres of the Midi in the thirteenth century [...] (ibid., 11).

The erasure of the past, and in particular of past tragedies that would impede a peaceful co-existence as one people, is an indispensable precondition for nation formation. Of course, this passage from Renan's essay is itself caught in a performative paradox, for how can Renan remember that which by his own account should have been forgotten long ago? The solution to this paradox is, as Benedict Anderson suggests in his reading of Renan in the revised edition of *Imagined Communities*, that the community-enabling act of forgetting is not a singular event which consigns irrevocably to oblivion what would disrupt the fragile unity. Rather, the act of forgetting must be performed over and over again, and consequently what must be forgotten must also be kept in view, however obliquely: “Having to ‘have already forgotten’ tragedies of which one needs unceasingly to be ‘reminded’ turns out to be a characteristic device in the later construction of national genealogies” (Anderson 2006, 201). In other words, the dynamic process of forgetting and remembrance works like a perpetuum mobile that generates national identity.

As this overview of some classic and some new critical perspectives on cultural forgetting suggests, we do well to take forgetting seriously as a complementary, constitutive force in the formation and deformation of cultural memory, instead of simply dismissing it as a case of individual, cognitive erasure. This volume is not the first one to rise to the challenge; recent years have seen the publication of several articles, monographs and essay collections that have begun to shed light on the cultural work of for-

getting in early modern culture specifically.<sup>7</sup> In contrast with earlier studies on cultural memory, they do so by self-consciously turning away from the totalizing view of memory in which forgetting can ever only be figured as a lack, and the attendant closed dialectic of absence and presence of memory, in favour of a more dynamic, constitutive role of forgetting in cultural processes (Ivic/Williams 2004, 1). These projects differ emphatically from attempts at recovering the counter-memories of the marginalized, the disenfranchised and the silenced, as well as from trauma studies, which typically examine the passage from psychological pain to full remembering, since those approaches conceptualize forgetting as “a violence, as a negative cultural force subordinate to memory”. Rather, Ivic and Williams maintain that forgetting “performs vital and complex cultural work, at times ideologically suspect, at other moments subversive, yet not restricted to a single political valence” (ibid., 3).

To be sure, forgetting usually does emerge on the side of the “ideologically suspect”, while the emphasis of the normative – usually couched in terms of morality or nature – typically relies on memory and acts of remembering, then as much as now. Where it was discussed in early modern culture (and the range of discourses that engaged with forgetting is quite remarkable), oblivion is widely pathologized (ibid., 4–7). Medical discourse defines it as a disease, ‘lethargy’ (derived from Lethe, the mythological river of forgetfulness), which needs to be treated. Biblical discourse casts spiritual self-forgetfulness as a sin, while philosophical-ethical discourse shifts the emphasis toward the neglect of the soul, in terms of a *nosce te ipsum* as a socially subversive transgression, a “contrary philosophical attitude that the wayward subject chooses to take toward his or her self and thus toward others” (ibid., 6). In colonial discourse, the wish that colonized people may forget their original nation goes hand in hand with an anxiety of colonizers ‘going native’. Self-forgetfulness as a literary or dramatic motif often serves to articulate an anxiety about the fluidity

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7 Cf., for example, Harald Weinrich’s groundbreaking study *Lethe: Kunst und Kritik des Vergessens* (1997), Anthony B. Dawson’s stimulating essay on “The Arithmetic of Memory” in early modern culture (1999), the essay collection edited by Ivic and Williams (2004), the monograph by Garrett A. Sullivan Jr. (2005), Roger Chartier’s study of written culture and memory from the eleventh to the eighteenth century, *Inscription and Erasure* (2005, transl. 2007), and the many pioneering articles which Jonathan Baldo has published since 1996 and which will be assembled in his forthcoming collection *Memory in Shakespeare’s Histories* (Routledge, 2011).



and instability of the early modern self. Yet at the same time, and often in the same texts, oblivional states of all kinds are also ascribed to a positive (in the sense of non-destructive, if not necessarily morally good) value: Roger Ascham's educational treatise *The Scholemaster* (1570), for example, acknowledges oblivion as a deliberate, godly process of selecting and editing human knowledge; the rhetorical and medical tract *Mnemonica* (1618) by John Willis describes the "art of forgetting" as something desirable, indeed as a necessary precondition for the functioning of memory since "deposition" clears the space of memory for new contents; and vengeance as well as love sickness (which provided the plots of innumerable tragedies and comedies at the time) were seen as forms of pathological remembering, as when Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) describes a lover cured of his obsession "as if he had taken a dramme of oblivion" (Ivic/Williams 2004, 7–9). These early modern discourses, then, acknowledge the complementary nature of remembering and forgetting, rather than pitching them against each other. If we do not want to make the mistake of turning a blind eye to a significant part of early modern culture, we, too, should acknowledge the constitutive force of oblivion, as Ivic and Williams emphasize:

Not only does forgetting struggle and collude with remembering to produce culture but it also forms its own images, places, materialities, and practices. To recover these sites in early modern literature helps to reconceptualise the archive and complicates a totalizing representation of mnemonic culture, and, as a result, problematize easy scholarly and historiographical access to what that culture and our culture consider to be worthy of remembering (Ivic/Williams 2004, 16).

In particular, the impact of the Reformation, to return to our point of departure, needs to be assessed anew from the perspective of 'forgetting faith'. While it undoubtedly engendered important projects of remembering – take, for instance, John Foxe's Protestant martyriology, *Acts and Monuments*, or the antiquarian efforts by John Camden, John Stow and others to preserve the memory of ruined monasteries and monuments – this impact also left its distinct traces on the early modern imagination in a heightened awareness of oblivion as a productive force as well as a deliberate practice.

Our volume takes its cue from this latter perspective and seeks to explore the forgetting of faith as a valid and important strategy for dealing with confessional conflict, be it in the form of religious conversion, tol-



eration, dissimulation or de-escalating, playful disregard.<sup>8</sup> This is the sense in which we chose ‘forgetting faith’ as the provocative motto for our volume: we wish to examine the cultural processes and strategies available at a specific time for dealing with confessional conflict by setting it aside, hiding it, evacuating its signs and practices of spiritual meaning and filling it with another (de- and resemiotization). These acts of forgetting do not result in erasure, destruction and silence but, on the contrary, are highly productive in that they constitute and enable modes of co-habitation of people and faiths in the interwoven fields of textual and dramatic representation, theoretical discourse and everyday practices. (IK)

### 3. ‘Forgetting Faith’ from the Perspective of Historical Studies

For historians, the formula of ‘forgetting faith’, so promising in literary and cultural studies, invites rejection on two levels: first, it seems impossible that someone could in fact ‘forget his faith’ in early modern Europe, and so the formula seems to achieve its provocative appeal by suggesting falsities; second, if by ‘forgetting faith’ only the downplaying and dissembling of the belonging to one confession is understood, the question seems very old. Since Delio Cantimori published his book on Italian heretics in 1939 (repr. in 1992), and since Lucien Febvre published his important essay on the religion of Rabelais in 1942, research on heterodox religious performances in the Renaissance and, more broadly, in pre-enlightenment Europe, has flourished. Nearly every student in France, and many abroad, studied Febvre’s reasoning on problem and method, on the “limites de l’incroyance au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle”, his creation of what would become the nucleus of the history of mentalities (first mention of the famous ‘outillage mental’) and his discussion of Calvin’s possible allusion

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8 Recent publications from the field of English studies which share our interest in how confessional controversy was negotiated textually (if not our specific focus on forgetting faith), include Hunt’s study of tolerance in Shakespeare’s plays (2003) as well as Mayer’s discussion of the creative interplay and confessional undecidability in his dramatic work (2007), Jeffrey Knapp’s (2002) influential account of how early modern theatre created a sense of communion and charity, drawing on the notion of a Pauline universalism and “corporate Christianity” that also underlies Kneidel’s (2008, 3) study of poetic and prose texts, and the essay collection *Representing Religious Pluralization in Early Modern Europe* (Höfele et al. 2007).

to Rabelais in his rejection of *nicodemites*. Shifting the focus of research from a history of mentalities still close to intellectual history to the micro-history of every day life to be found in the archives of inquisitorial processes, Carlo Ginzburg and others following in the footsteps of Cantimori have taken on the research on nicodemism in early modern history. From the 1970s onwards, the key question was how people dissimulated their confession and faith for purposes of political and economic prosperity or just so as not to fall into the hands of the persecuting institutions, mainly of Catholic Europe (Ginzburg 1970, Zagorin 1990).

The notion of 'nicodemism' is borrowed from Calvin, who in a famous polemical treatise published in 1544 (*Excuse à Messieurs les Nicodémistes sur la complainte qu'ilz font de sa trop grand' rigueur*), blamed all Christians for dissimulating their new Protestant faith – like Nicodemus who came only in the dark of the night to Jesus (John 3, 1–21) – instead of openly professing it, if necessary until martyrdom (Cf. Calvin 1999, 3:222–264). Another important biblical mirror of early modern practices of dissimulation was Paul's letter to the Galatians 2, 11–14, which discusses Petrus' irritating behaviour in sometimes breaking Jewish law by eating together with Gentiles, while at other times obeying it by withdrawing from Gentiles when he had to interact with Jews. That passage, indicating the differences between Gentiles and Jews converted to Christianity in the early church, was easily adaptable to similar problems in church history, starting with Augustine, who used it as a corner stone for his treatment of lying (*De mendacio*) which later on formed the central component of the canon law treatment of *simulatio/dissimulatio*.<sup>9</sup> Another strand of early modern thinking on dissimulation belongs to a rather distinct field that seldom interferes with the religious problems: dissimulation as an aspect of courtly behaviour, reflected on by Baldassare Castiglione (or even more by his less known Machiavellian counter-part Pellegrino de Grimaldi [1544]), to the distinct treatment of dissimulation by Torquato Accetto (1641; Villari 1987, Cavaillé 2001) or, in the English context, Francis Bacon (1625). I would rather stress here the distance between that realm of political reasoning in courtiers' behaviour and the problem of religious dissimulation.

9 For this tradition, cf. Zagorin 1990, 15–37. For the juridical background of *simulatio*, cf. Blecher 1974 and Wesener 1984, who argues that looking at that juridical tradition helps us to see how 'lying' was not only a theological problem in Calvin's time: Probably Calvin, jurist by formation, knew the problem and the terms 'simulatio/dissimulatio' even more commonly from those secular sources.

Historical research has taken several different paths from the starting point evoked by the names of Febvre, Cantimori and Ginzburg. One direction is marked by the many studies on the Spanish and Italian inquisition – the latter increasing even more after the opening of the Vatican archives in 1998 – which together have treated several thousand cases of processes where the problem of ‘nicodemism’ and religious dissimulation was at stake. It is not the place here to review that literature (for good overviews, see Prosperini 1996, Bethencourt 2009, Black 2009). Another direction is taken by studies on the emergence of ‘tolerance’ in the early modern epoch (Lecler 1965, Berkvens-Stevelinck et al. 1997, Méchoulan et al. 2001). But recent research increasingly refrains from continuing the idea of ‘emergence of tolerance’, emphasizing instead that all through the confessional age, ‘real’ tolerance was not possible. Significantly, many currently prefer to do research on ‘coexistence’ in non-tolerant times (Grandjean/Roussel 1998, Dixon et al. 2009). Despite the fact that important intellectual studies on tolerance, from Castellio to pseudo-Bodin’s *Colloquium heptaplomeres*, were written and sometimes also published at that time, those texts were always a minor irenic voice among the louder polemical treatises. Nevertheless, they indicate the frames of possibility in what could be thought and written, and some of them demonstrate a remarkably reflexive and distanced treatment of ‘religion’ as a socio-psychological factor to be dealt with (Zwierlein 2009). Other historians have concentrated instead on early modern daily life in multiconfessional cities and regions, such as Etienne François on Augsburg (1993) or Benjamin Kaplan on Utrecht (1995). In the Netherlands, there is a good deal of research on the question of how especially confessional ‘indifference’ was to be lived and performed in early modern society (Bergsma 1999, Zijlstra 2000, Grochowina 2003). Furthermore, a bulk of research has been devoted to early modern reformers, ‘intellectuals’ and other believers who were somewhere ‘in between’ the major confessions. Mario Turchetti (1984) has called them using, once again, a Calvinist expression, the ‘moyenneurs’, the middlers or go-betweens. Thierry Wanegffelen (1995) has situated those heterodox but not radical persons in the ‘plain or flat country’ between Rome and Geneva.

Finally, there remains a bulk of research on the emergence of ‘les politiques’ in sixteenth-century France, a group whose composition and number is unclear and whose identity recent research has thoroughly begun to question (Bettinson 1989, Beame 1993, Turchetti 2002). What is certain is that there were elements of the emergence of a political discourse distinct from law, moral and religion in sixteenth century Eu-

rope. That much can be shown even at the heart of Roman Catholic intrigues: if we look at the political discourses by which the papal administration analyzed the map of confessional Europe from the 1570s onwards, it is possible to claim that even papal religious politics was, in its method, ‘Machiavellian’.

An implicit narrative point of view outside of ‘religion’ was indeed necessary, in order to look at the confessional frontiers objectively as something that could be shaped at will (Zwierlein 2007b). But certainly there was nothing like a ‘party of politics’, as a tradition with a somewhat Schmittian derivation demands.<sup>10</sup> Some recent collaborative studies have attempted to grasp those new perspectives on a confessional age. No longer seeing it as an age of clear-cut frontiers between fundamentalist marionet agents of Rome, Genève and Wittenberg, they explored its inter-, intra- and transconfessional elements (Greyerz et al. 2003) or placed the transgression of religious and confessional boundaries at the center of interest (Kendall et al. 2009, Schunka 2006). These studies on conversions in the confessional age bring to the fore the sometimes even serial and frequent conversions, reconversions and recurrent reconversions, for example of merchants crossing frequently regional and confessional borders.

Thus we are facing a double movement: on the one hand there is a ‘religious turn’ in cultural and historical studies in general as outlined in the beginning of this introduction, but on the other hand, the latest research on the confessional age itself has addressed instead questions of non-, trans-, intra- and interconfessional behaviour. To my knowledge, however, no one in that field has so far approached this issue by assuming a ‘forgetting of faith’ by one or another historical actor. It might seem like rephrasing the Febvrian question of the ‘atheism’ of sixteenth-century actors in a new way – but that is not really our aim: by focusing on acts and expressions of ‘forgetting’, our aim has been to study the possibilities and limits of *explicit reflexivity* involved in the historical forces of religious schisms in early modern Europe. How did kings deliberately order their subjects to ‘forget’ the religious troubles? How did political theorists re-

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10 The idea that the new emerging sphere of politics did ‘neutralize’ the competing religious antagonism was expressed in Carl Schmitt’s *Der Begriff des Politischen* (1932); in that tradition, cf. Schnur 1962 and Christin 1997, who, without being a follower of Schmitt, employ the idea of the emergence of an independent sphere of politics in the French Wars of Religion. For Schmitt’s reception in Germany, cf. van Laak 2002 and Ottmann 2003.

flect on the oblivional forces of religious discontinuities? How were people explicitly and strategically treated as being ‘of no church’? It is this interest in explicitness, in the reflexivity about the borders of confession and of religion, politics and economics that distinguishes the approach of this volume from the long tradition of studies on dissimulation and nicodemism, even if it still builds on and is indebted to them. (CZ)

#### 4. ‘Forgetting Faith’ as a New Perspective on Music History?

As regards music, the notion of ‘forgetting faith’ may at first glance seem even more irritating, in both of its components. Let us begin with the second, ‘faith’. Music in Europe in early modern times was generally connected with religious functions and institutions: the figure of the professional musician emerged from the chapel (which itself came into being as a musical institution by altering an ecclesiastical structure; Lodes/Lüttenken 2009), and the musical repertoire – at least that part of it that was usually notated and transmitted – constituted to a great extent liturgical or religious forms like masses or motets. At first glance, the term ‘forgetting’ seems equally difficult to understand. Music has a particularly difficult relationship with oblivion, because it is already an instable medium for remembrance in itself – the sound of music is a fleeting emanation, and pieces of music are only perceptible in the moment of their execution; music is more transient than other arts and depends on memory and/or notation for recollection. At the same time, the category of remembrance is of central importance for the perceptual process of a single piece: to understand the structure of a piece, a listener must remember what happened shortly before. If in the sixteenth century this was still difficult to conceptualize, the young René Descartes described in his *Compendium musices* (1618) an interesting model for perceiving musical structures when listening (Gozza 1995): the listener has to bear in mind the parts of the music already heard to relate them via his *imaginatio* to what follows.

Nevertheless, sixteenth-century conceptions of music fully acknowledge the efficacy of music (especially song) to enable the memorization of texts and their contents, and this specificity was habitually invoked for catechetical or pedagogical purposes: “Non dubium est musicam generi humano præcipue datam esse, sacrorum causa, Primum vt cantu, tanquam literis conseruarentur & propagarentur oracula diuinitus tradita, Durabilior est enim numerorum & Carminum memoria” (Melanchthon

1538, preface to *Selectae harmoniae ... de passione Domini*, Wittenberg, Rhau). This emphasis on memory and religion might seem to go against the grain of this volume; but as the argument described above could be – and was – applied by different confessions, the role of memory in music is not bound to religious-confessional issues as such but seems to operate on a more profound, systematic level, which is a first indicator that ‘forgetting faith’ may touch phenomena in music and musical thought where the confessional divide is not of central importance.

The relationship between music and *memoria* in broader terms has been dealt with repeatedly in recent times. ‘Memory’ in these contexts can take on a very practical meaning (uses of the Guidonian hand, for example, or other mnemonic techniques), but it can also be discussed in the context of tradition and creativity (Canguilhem 2009, Lorenzetti 2009, Berger 2009). Taking up impulses from Jan Assmann’s research, Otto Gerhard Oexle discusses the establishment of institutional structures that could support musical practice (like chantries) in relationship to the concept of ‘cultural memory’. Early modern memory culture, according to his definition, was characterized by the ongoing presence of the deceased (“Gegenwart der Toten”, Oexle 2009, 19). Perhaps not surprisingly, it was musicians and composers who began remembering defunct colleagues with memorial compositions at a very early stage. One possible reason for this is that ‘the composers’ were still not a well-defined professional group: while they did seek to establish their professional authority as musicians by citing each other, formally most of them were still clerics and dependent on ecclesiastical structures, and the practice of music was primarily linked with its liturgical functions (Lütteken 2007). The practices related to ensuring memory could contribute to securing the material means for music (institutions, endowments, votive services, sources, dedications). The functional aspect of music in cultural memory has even been interpreted as an alternative ‘political economy’ of music (Voigt 2008), although avoiding a deeper discussion of options of a lack of memory. This mnemonic culture of music, as well as its purpose, can be usefully discussed in terms of confessional conflict, since the Reformation attacked it as belonging to a set of memorial practices that were considered useless and superstitious.

Aspects of music history have often been excluded from general historiography, cultural history or the history of other arts and literature, and this is partly due to the difficulty of developing a valid concept for

a ‘Renaissance’ in music history.<sup>11</sup> Thus a number of interdisciplinary discussions have not been systematically applied to music. This, however, does not mean that they cannot be applied at all, even if we must consider that meaning in music, when related to religious practice or identity, is still more difficult to determine than the meanings of texts, because the subject is at the same time less directly expressed and medially over-determined. A motet may use text to convey a message, but this message is always complicated by its musical dimension and its performance in specific contexts.

Given the centrality of sacral functions for musical practice, it is difficult to deny its religious significance, but the idea of ‘forgetting faith’ may open up perspectives in early modern contexts that have not yet been covered by current research. Where religious aspects of early modern music history have been explicitly formulated as a goal of research, they have been understood mostly as markers of difference. In recent research, the investigation of polemic potentials and strategies of demarcation is dominant (Oettinger 2001, Fischer 2004, Boyd 2005). Less explicitly, the extensive surveys of the history of church music in the twentieth century have also usually been limited to the perspective of one Christian confession and highlight the coherence of its respective history, whether written from a Catholic or a Protestant point of view (for a good introduction from the Lutheran perspective, Leaver 2007, 3–21, 277–291). Examples can be extended to Calvinist, Zwinglian, Jesuit, or other confessional contexts for music (Jenny 1966, Garside 1979, Monson 2006; a choice of typical treatments in Vendrix 2011). Even negative statements that analysed the lack of difference between music of different confessions – “[Lutheranism] developed a tradition in which the musical boundaries between the traditional Roman and the newly invented Protestant liturgies were sometimes less than clear” (Atlas 2006, 111) – usually imply that a borderline should exist, but do not systematically question their confessional premises. On the other hands, many music histories of regions or places have not taken into account confessional features to a greater extent (Schlüter 2010).

One consequence of the aforementioned confessionalized perspective was a wide neglect of musicians who cannot be clearly attributed to one denomination, especially in Germany and France. Accepting the idea of

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11 For an alternative model, cf. Strohm 1993, as well as 2004 on the relationship with humanism; a concise overview of the concept of ‘Renaissance’ in musicology can be found in Lütteken 2011 and Vendrix 2011.



confessional permeability, of forgetting faith in specific contexts and for specific purposes, will hopefully make their *œuvres* more accessible. In order to understand the impact of confessionalisation on music history, recent research has worked out more detailed contexts for musical phenomena, mostly the development of the musical habits of the new denominations (Veit 1986, Leaver 2007, Wollny 2007). Outside of the centres of the Reformation movements, however, the connection between musicians and their precise theological context has received little attention. If at all, it is mainly exceptional cases – like Magdeburg as a centre of radical confessionalisation during the Interim conflict or the bi-confessional city of Augsburg – that have been studied. But the variety of contexts and the ambiguities were more extensive and still demand investigation of so-far lesser known cases and materials.<sup>12</sup> In particular, Protestant musical practices and especially Lutheranism have received some attention, because in this context elaborate polyphonic music was widely in use and the model of special genres for this confession (like the ‘*Evangelienmotetten*’) could be discussed – a productive, if somewhat reductive research paradigm that gave rise to a teleological narrative of the sixteenth century as a precursor of Johann Sebastian Bach’s time.

It nevertheless remains problematic to assume that there could be a confessionally charged style in music. Even the inclusion of music in a counter-reformation index illustrates the intrinsic difficulty in singling out ‘forbidden’ musical features; the distinction was mostly based on the text that underlay the music, while the music itself remained elusive and could not even be pinned down by Papal prescription. The Council of Trent could not only prohibit “lascivious or impure” music, and in an elaborate list from the Munich Jesuit College of 1591 the description of prohibited repertory is likewise not very precise: “Let those [compositions] be burned, which have indecent text and music, of such a manner of singing [i.e., mode of expression or style] as obscene or vain things are thought to underlie” (Crook 2009, 6 and 56). While this may refer to the sensuality of chromaticism employed in some compositions, it again does not establish a criterion independent from the content of the text. Even if the treatment of music in Trient was not very detailed and the story of

12 Heidrich 2006, Oettinger 2001, Fischer 2004. A current research project by David Burn investigates Leonhard Paminger, who worked as a school-master in (Catholic) Passau, but was personally inclined to Lutheranism: [http://www-researchportal.be/en/project/music-and-theology-in-reformation-germany-the-case-of-leonhard-p-minger-nbsp-\(KUL\\_3H090317\)/organisations.html#tabs](http://www-researchportal.be/en/project/music-and-theology-in-reformation-germany-the-case-of-leonhard-p-minger-nbsp-(KUL_3H090317)/organisations.html#tabs).



Giovanni Pierluigi Palestrina's 'rescue' of polyphonic church music remains legendary, the narrative of the Counter-Reformation as a movement antagonistic to the Reformation has been widely accepted in music history (Schmidt 2003, Monson 2006, Weber 2008). It is usually reported in relatively martial terms: "An anthology of 'Catholic' church music, musically distinguished and consistent with Catholic orthodoxy, could be turned into a very subtle weapon in their anti-Protestant propaganda, a weapon that could persuasively strengthen the Catholic position and attack the Protestants on the musical as well as the denominational battle line." (Leitmeir 2002, 217). Nevertheless, the central claim of the Catholic reforms of church music – namely that the text must be pronounced in an understandable way,<sup>13</sup> is not limited to this confession alone. Metrical compositions for Reformed Psalm collections or simple chorals in German had to fulfil a similar demand: that a congregation must be able to follow the service and understand religious instruction. For English music history, the multiple changes of confession constituted a special challenge for historiography; outstanding figures with an 'ambiguous' profile like William Byrd (Rupp 2007, McCarthy 2007) have attracted the attention of scholars, as has the relationship between musical practice and the formation of a Protestant identity, from a more sociological point of view (Willis 2010).

Far less attention was given to the non-distinctive elements of musical practice, like the continuation of older practices and recourses to medieval or earlier traditions, which contributed nonetheless to the shaping of musical practice in general. In this regard, a productive discrepancy between the historical situation and modern historiography must be noted: where the liturgical practice of a certain denomination tolerated polyphonic compositions at all, it became nearly impossible to distinguish between 'Catholic' and 'Protestant' music. The composer Sixt Dietrich, for example, could observe that around 1540 in Wittenberg the liturgy maintained the pre-Reformation forms, including polyphonic music for the mass.<sup>14</sup> Repertoire originating from 'Catholic' or 'Protestant' contexts is often transmitted side by side in contemporary sources without the need, apparently, to justify this 'contamination'. Modern Historians

13 On Ruffo's music as a model for this, cf. Lockwood 1970.

14 "[...] ich geschweyg der Ceremonien die noch sein und ehrlich gehalten zum goczdienst; Alle festa singt man ein herrlich Ampt in figuris: Introit, Kyrie, Et in terra, Patrem, Alleluja, Sanctus und Communio wie von alter her, also dass lützel geändert ist" (qtd. in Schlüter 2010, 61).

thus had to confirm a “fast vollständige Literaturgemeinschaft beider Konfessionen” (Blume/Finscher 1965, 73). Possibly, such cross-confessional appropriations of repertoire should then not be considered as such, but as a result of an intentional or non-intentional ‘forgetting’ of former (or only alleged) ascriptions.

The reasons for such a ‘forgetting of faith’ in matters musical are varied. For one, the professional and economic interests of composers may have contributed to toning down confessional distinctions. Music publishing centres like Nuremberg, Augsburg or Antwerp supported a wide circulation of repertoire. Usually, it was only the text that was altered: contrafacta could be used to camouflage unwelcome content. A good example is a collection of Italian madrigals, *I trionfi di Dori* (1592), which was re-issued in 1619 under the title *Triumph di Dorothea* with spiritual texts and extensive paratextual inscriptions, mostly biblical quotations that support a Lutheran reading of this collection (Hammond 2007).

The downplaying or masking of confessional differences was much more widespread for another reason: in order to authorize their existence, new confessions had to underline their closeness to the existing traditions instead of claiming their independence. The typical paradigm of ‘restauratio’, widely used in the Renaissance, could be applied to religious objects as well: announcing this project already in its name, the Reformation presented itself as a reestablishment of the pristine Christian tradition. In music, this can help us to understand the continuation of liturgical traditions in spite of doctrinal renewal: for church music in England, its apparent ‘traditionalism’ can be understood as a strategy of justification (Marsh 2010). The same label of ‘restauratio’ could be claimed for the radical reforms in Switzerland that maintained the Psalter as their only and primordial musical repertory (Garside 1979, Grunewald 2004), or for the uninterrupted tradition of Latin chant in Protestant liturgy, which was sanctioned by Luther himself. All confessions converged practically in their attempts at reforming and unifying Gregorian chant, which took place at nearly the same time (a typical product was the *Editio Medicaea* of 1614/1615). These cases can be understood as sidestepping confessional differences by recurring to an older tradition.

A certain ‘forgetting’ of confessional implications seems thus to have been favoured by tendencies towards historicizing musical artefacts. During the sixteenth century, a growing historical (if not antiquarian) interest in music developed that deemed even ‘old’ music worthy of attention and memory. Theorists writing on music increasingly paid attention to historical aspects: references to musicians and music of the past became more

familiar, stating their remoteness or recommending them as artistic models. In musical sources, a parallel tendency can be observed around the mid-sixteenth century: more and older repertoire is collected and transmitted. Likewise, there was an interest in the artistic qualities and compositional features of individual pieces, a perspective that would have tended to neglect the discourse on the religious and liturgical functionality of music, and, by the same token, rendered possible confessional differentiations less important.

Other tendencies may also be linked to the phenomenon of a (supposed) confessional oblivion. Contrafacta, re-textings of pieces with a new text, present by their mere existence some material that attests to the possibility of detaching pieces of music from their meanings: a new text replaces the original text with its meaning, as is the case with the so called *travestimenti spirituali* that ‘forget’ an originally secular background in favour of religious texts. The effect, however, is not so much a neat replacement of one meaning by another, since it is difficult to determine if and to what extent the original layer of meaning is still present. It was especially during the seventeenth century that an increasing internationalization and circulation of musical repertoire could be observed. This phenomenon has been discussed as “crossing the confessional boundaries” (Frandsen 2006) in the case of the court of Dresden, where numerous sacred concertos by Italian – Catholic – composers originated and which, at the same time, met well the demands of nascent Pietism. To examine similar convergences in the sixteenth century promises to be fruitful when attention does not focus on confessional differentiations, but on assimilations and the general accessibility of common repertoire.

A number of elements and phenomena can thus be adduced where the confessional divide was not of foremost importance for music history. Because of this, and notwithstanding all necessary cautions, research on musical practices in early modern times can profit from the application of a concept of cultural forgetting. The notion of oblivion is particularly productive when concerned with the contemporary meanings attributed to music and its practice, and this can help to overcome limitations imposed by modern ‘confessionalist’ perspectives. The modern scholar may gain more freedom to face the plurality of contexts and usages of music in early modern times – and at the same time, aspects of music history can be discussed better in connection with other disciplines. (IG)

## 5. Overview

Three interrelated fields of inquiry are addressed by the essays collected here: aesthetic production, scholarly discourse and social practice. This interdisciplinary approach raises a range of questions: How can we conceive of these fields as possible sites of explicit reflexivity on religious ‘forgetting’ or sites of de-escalation? Do different discursive, aesthetic or social contexts inflect or even deflect the demands of religious loyalties? Does, in particular, aesthetic practice allow for a suspension of faith that may not have been possible in scholarly discourse? Are there theoretical and political writings that are informed by confessional conflict but manage to avoid antagonistic rhetoric? How do denominational allegiances intersect with economic or aesthetic considerations, or how are they displaced by them? How do individuals or social groups live and work together, communicate or trade with one another, despite given divisions in their faith? How do textual, dramatic or musical works both reflect on and perform such an erasure, suspension or displacement of confessional conflict? What are the techniques and social practices effecting such a cultural forgetting of faith? In considering these questions from different disciplinary perspectives, the chapters open up new vistas on the religious and cultural life of early modern Europe.

Richard Wilson assesses the reverberations of the European Wars of Religion in Shakespeare’s plays, where they appear emerge as an insistent, ongoing anxiety about faith and the danger, necessity or possibility of forgetting it. Or perhaps we should use this word in the plural, for ‘faith’ was an emphatically pluralized and pluralizing force after the Reformation that complicated notions of authority and loyalty, of prejudice and tolerance, of charity and community. This is of course an issue too long and and too complex for just one play. As Wilson demonstrates, it lies indeed at the heart of a wide range of Shakespeare’s plays across the genres, although *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, that poignant meditation on the ineluctable betrayal of faith – whether amorous, religious or political – provides a rewarding focus for the negotiation of religious conflicts, both on the theatrical stage in England and on the political stage in France. In a remarkable *tour de force*, Wilson shows how Shakespeare’s plays offer a critical comment on confessional controversies, in relationship with the project of uniting the nation, a project of healing the religious divide which would increasingly become the province of art.

Andrea Frisch’s essay focuses similarly on the representation of the Wars of Religion in French tragedies written between 1560 and 1640.

The experience of France's sixteenth-century wars of religion informed the thematic and aesthetic choices of French poets far into the seventeenth century, in particular via a political discourse that emphasized the gains to be had from forgetting one of the most painful and turbulent periods in French history. By drawing on parallels from a pagan classical past, in particular the figure of Caesar and the Roman civil wars, poets and playwrights managed to negotiate politically sensitive issues of religion in their portraits of contemporary French monarchs.

The next essay takes us back to the English stage. Pointing out that Shakespeare's histories do not merely recall the past but reflect on the nature of memory itself, Jonathan Baldo maintains that they both mirror and intervene in social and political conflicts over the forms and uses of remembering in early modern England. Staging a primal scene of the origin of historical consciousness in the traumatic loss in *Richard II*, Shakespeare presents a sense of history that closely resembles what Hayden White has characterized as the "historical sublime". Ostensibly designed to recover the past, the play instead explores the manifold uses of and conflicts over forgetting in a culture whose memory of the past was diverse and unsettled.

Faith is, as Ingrid Hotz-Davies argues in her contribution, the result of an enormous reduction of complexity in the sense that it requires establishing the boundaries of what is *not* to be believed, of finding its bearings in a potentially unlimited field of what is currently being believed and what was believed in the past and across different cultures. Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* is a text that, in spite of its declared aim of defining the one, true faith, exposes itself to precisely this complexity of possibilities. In cataloguing these options and committing itself to as complete a catalogue as possible, consisting of ancient and 'heathen' as well as various Christian beliefs, the *Anatomy* ends by almost completely emptying the core of what is to be believed. In so doing, the text illustrates that the most effective means of forgetting may in fact be indiscrimination: a flooding of the system with everything it would need to exclude, to pinpoint and evaluate, to use as demarcation points, in order to exist. In the end, in Burton's text, there is a rich phenomenology of faiths, but faith itself is 'forgotten'.

Cornel Zwierlein's essay proposes a political theory of oblivion in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Italy. He begins with the observation – long ignored by historians of political thought – that Machiavelli's *Discorsi* offer an explicit reflection of "forgetting religion" as a shaping force of collective memory and society which statecraft should take into account,

Zwierlein proceeds to establish that this oblivional theory has itself been persistently side-stepped by historical commentators as well as scholarly critics. One notable exception is Scipione Ammirato's *Discorsi sopra Cornelio Tacito* (1607), which includes a chapter entitled "Onde nasca l'obliuione delle cose" and which, in commenting on Machiavelli, articulates a theory of collective memory and oblivion based on religious change. Given the rare treatment of this chapter in historiography, we have decided to include the original text as an appendix.

The next essay also approaches the issue of forgetting faith from the perspective of political discourse, but like Wilson's, traces it back to poetry and drama. Freya Sierhuis examines the debates on religious peace in the Dutch Republic, where the patch-work pattern of confessions and sects produced by religious pluralization made the issue of toleration particularly pressing and difficult. This may account for the fact that strict theories of religious toleration were soon adapted to more pragmatic modes of confessional coexistence. The essay provides an insight into the mechanisms of religious coexistence presented in the political writings of Grotius and his supporters in the years between 1610 and 1619, before it demonstrates how Grotius' ideas gained new currency and effect in Vondel's theatrical adoptions in the late 1630s. In particular, Vondel's Joseph-trilogy, with its theme of brotherly strife and reconciliation, problematizes civil and confessional conflict, and in the end overcomes it. These plays constitute a form of biblical tragedy in which *anagnorisis* and *peripeteia* are not just structural moments but afford the audience an experience of catharsis and conversion. Catharsis is here spiritualized and becomes a moment of conversion as well as reconciliation, a mode of effecting the forgetting of religious division by dramatic means.

Were musicians able, or even forced, to hide their faith, to forget or to neglect their private, interior religious beliefs in the wake of the Reformation? And what kind of aesthetic expression might such musicians have been able to give to such shifts and changes (or indeed feignings) of allegiance or conviction? This is the two-fold question addressed by Inga Mai Groote and Philippe Vendrix in their broad survey of musical theory and musical practice in sixteenth-century Italy, France, Germany and Switzerland. The essay proceeds in three steps from individual musicians' strategies of concealing their faith for the sake of a professional career, to musical markers of confessional allegiance (such as the genre of the motet), whose tonal and textual semiotics were, however, complicated by their being appropriated by different confessions, to theoretical paradigms of

early modern musical thought that were informed by (as well as informative about) the author-composer's confessional perspective.

Andrew Spicer's essay examines a particularly interesting instance of negotiating confessional conflict by accepting the possibility of faith – temporarily and strategically – being forgotten. In 1571, concern about the growing immigrant population led the Elizabethan authorities to order two surveys of the foreigners or 'strangers' in the city of London. The second of these surveys inquired whether the immigrants attended the exile congregations, their parish church or were 'of no church'. A considerable minority described themselves as 'of no church', an intriguingly ambivalent category that left open the extent to which the label 'of no church' actually represented confessional indifference or whether it was used as a convenient form of obfuscation or 'forgetting faith' in the confessionally-charged environment of early modern London.

A converse scenario is presented in the essay that follows – the presence of English, Protestant merchants in Catholic Spain – but with state authorities similarly willing to overlook the heretic faith of the profitable strangers. Thomas Weller analyses the change of mind that led to a more lenient treatment of Protestant merchants by Spanish authorities in the last decades of the sixteenth century, and highlights the impact of this new policy on the everyday practice of interreligious contact. Whereas the presence of foreign Protestants was tacitly tolerated in certain places, they were not allowed to practice their religion in public. The widespread practice of dissimulation favoured the formation of shifting or even hybrid identities among the foreigners. Although Spanish authorities were quite successful in their efforts to separate the transfer of goods from the transfer of religious ideas, in the long run the commercial relations with the religious other helped to diminish religious prejudices and to overcome the existing confessional and cultural boundaries.

The issue of tolerance across religious and cultural boundaries by means of pragmatic dissimulation is also the focus of the final essay by Stefan Schmuck. Noting the centrality of faith to English travellers journeying to Islamic dominions at the end of the sixteenth century, Schmuck explores how they negotiated the differences between Christendom and Islam as well as among Christian confessions in the Ottoman empire. They did so through what Schmuck terms "practical and textual dissimulation": both in the actual experience and the retrospective representation of their travels, dissimulation offered them a practical strategy for accommodating, if not circumventing, each other's confessional conflicts by



downplaying antagonisms, while nevertheless preserving their religious identity.

Jane Newman's afterword brings these early modern attempts at negotiating confessional conflict into a dialogue with our own post-modern ways of dealing with the challenges posed by the heterogeneous populations of nation-states today. Rather than subscribing to the secularization narrative that posits us in a "post-Westphalian moment" – a moment characterized by a secure division between state and religion, which had its beginning in the Westphalian Treaty of 1648 – Newman asks, echoing Bruno Latour, whether we have ever been secular. When reviewing critical scholarship on the treaty in her explicit dialogue with the essays assembled in this volume, Newman insists on the continuing intersection of religion and politics after the Westphalian Treaty and the ongoing necessity to negotiate confessional conflicts even in a (seemingly) secularized age. 'Forgetting faith', in this secular view, is very much an effect of the critical reception of the treaty rather than an aspect of the treaty itself. Her close reading of its terms, and in particular of the *Instrumentum Pacis Osnabrugensis*, demonstrates the extent to which faith remained inscribed in the very structure of the modern nation-state and political sovereignty, and also suggests how its complex, circumspect management of religious pluralism can serve as a model for our own time. If we have never been secular, then we are perhaps still – or should be – Westphalian. (IK)

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